Business Plan

2017–2018

Department of Labour
and Advanced Education

NOVA SCOTIA

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Budget 2017–2018: Business Plans

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

We are pleased to present the 2017-18 Business Plan for the Department of Labour and Advanced Education.

Our department's focus is wide-ranging and diverse. From post-secondary education to workplace safety, from skills and training to labour services, LAE helps create a competitive workforce and a fair, safe, and productive Nova Scotia in which to learn, work and live.

The work we have planned for the year ahead is focused on the future: on youth, innovation, and skills development. We will continue to partner with the private sector to create jobs and opportunities for Nova Scotians. We will keep working to reduce the regulatory burden on businesses so they can grow their company – and the economy.

We will align our work with government's key priorities, as well as One Nova Scotia's call to action. We will do this by:

- leading government-wide collaboration on the development and retention of young people in Nova Scotia;
- working with post-secondary institutions to implement a province-wide experiential learning program, including internships and co-op placements, to provide more hands-on learning opportunities for students;
- continuing to focus provincial research funding on areas of greatest strategic impact for the province; and
- expanding Connector programs to create more networking and job-sourcing opportunities.

We encourage you to visit www.novascotia.ca/lae to read our business plan and learn more about our department.

Honourable Kelly Regan
Minister for Labour and Advan
Minister Responsible for Youth

Duff Montgomerie
Deputy Minister for Labour and Advanced Education

DEPARTMENT MANDATE

The Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) works to contribute to a competitive workforce by making strategic investments in people, programs, services and partnerships.

Vision

Our vision is to foster Nova Scotians' belief in a bigger future - knowing where the jobs are and will be, building the skills to access those jobs, and working to their highest potential in fair, equitable, safe, productive, and inclusive workplaces.

Mission

The Department of LAE will work to ensure that all Nova Scotians believe their future is here, with each person confident in their abilities to prosper. We will do this by maximizing our capacity to have more people learning, more people working and working safely, and more sustainable businesses in our province.

Mandate

Our mandate is to provide a fair, equitable, safe, productive, and inclusive environment in which to learn, work, and live. The broad mandate of the department includes:

- Regulatory responsibility for occupational health and safety, technical safety, the Workers' Advisers Program, labour relations, and labour standards.
- Improving access among Nova Scotians to labour market information, employment services, and learning programs that support their labour market attachment and growth. Strategic action is taken to align the needs of employees with those of employers to help all Nova Scotians prepare for, find, and keep employment.
- Providing opportunities for individuals to advance at home, in the community, or in the workplace through adult learning, literacy and essential skills, and skills development programs.
- Providing funding, services, and support to post-secondary institutions and post-secondary students to ensure high-quality post-secondary education and training remains accessible and affordable.

To deliver on this mandate, LAE will undertake the following actions:

- Work with post-secondary institutions to implement a province-wide experiential learning program, including internships and co-op placements, to provide more hands-on learning opportunities for students.
- Expand Connector programs to create more networking and job-sourcing opportunities.
- Continue to focus provincial research funding on areas of greatest strategic impact for the province.

MINISTER OF YOUTH MANDATE

The mandate for Youth was assigned to the Minister of LAE in 2015. In October 2016, support for the Minister of Youth was transitioned to LAE.

Mandate

The mandate for the Minister of Youth is to:

- reverse outmigration numbers by attracting and retaining more 18-34 year olds than those leaving the province;
- retain more youth in the province and achieve youth employment levels so that the unemployment rate for 18-34 year olds is less than 12%; and
- increase workforce participation, especially for underrepresented groups.

To deliver on this mandate, the Minister of Youth will undertake the following action:

- Given our government's priority focus on the development and retention of young people in Nova Scotia, lead government-wide collaboration in this area.

NOVA SCOTIA APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY

The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA), established July 2014, is responsible for stewarding and operating a relevant, accessible, and responsive industry-led trades training and certification system. It is an agent of the Crown and has developed its own Business Plan for 2017-18. While the Agency is separate, its actions that align with the mandate for LAE and Youth are reflected in the Department's Business Plan for this year. More information about the Agency can be found at www.nsapprenticeship.ca.

KEY INITIATIVES FOR 2017-18

LAE continues to fully align our efforts with clear and measurable investments in innovation, education, training, and skills development as well as investments in our youth. These investments will directly support the prosperity of the province, where people will find good, sustainable jobs and are empowered to create new businesses that are the foundation for a bright future.

To be successful, we are committed to working collaboratively across government, with our federal and municipal partners, as well as with our stakeholders in the private sector.

In 2017-18, LAE will advance the following priorities:

- encourage employer participation in providing opportunities to youth and post-secondary graduates;
- enhance accountability through metrics and measurement;
- enhance programs and opportunities for Nova Scotians;
- enhance student assistance support;
- foster innovation through research and development;
- help Nova Scotians meet their full employment potential;
- improve processes for client service and program delivery;
- increase awareness and accessibility of information;
- promote apprenticeship as a viable post-secondary option;
- promote sustainable universities;
- recruit and retain international and interprovincial students;
- reduce barriers for business through harmonization with the Atlantic provinces;
- steward federal-provincial labour market agreements;
- support fairness, safety and training through consistent compliance; and
- support youth transition.

Encourage Employer Participation in Providing Opportunities to Youth and Post-Secondary Graduates

- In partnership with the Department of Municipal Affairs and the Regional Enterprise Networks, two new Connector Programs will be created to provide opportunities for newcomers and graduates to develop their professional networks and connections with potential employers, while providing employers with access to talented job seekers so they can expand and diversify their local workforce.
- Through our Co-op Education Incentive program, we will provide wage assistance to private sector, government-funded, and non-profit organizations to create additional opportunities for career-related work experiences for university and community college co-operative students.
- Graduate to Opportunity will support the hiring of larger numbers of recent university and college graduates for permanent, full-time jobs in their chosen careers through hiring

incentives to small businesses, non-profit, and social enterprise employers. The program will also provide a new diversity bonus to encourage the hiring of graduates who identify as aboriginal Canadians, persons with disabilities, or visible minorities, and for women in under-represented occupations as well as for international student graduates.

- Dedicated to supporting the provincial experiential learning initiatives for post-secondary education students, Private Career Colleges will encourage the effective integration of experiential learning components into occupational-training programs, and will conduct a review to improve the quality of existing components.
- Increased funding support will be provided to Mitacs Accelerate, which provides opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students as well as postdoctoral fellows to gain applied research experience through internships with companies, while helping companies gain a competitive advantage through investment in research and development. This program also helps to facilitate international opportunities for students between Canada and the Mitacs partner countries.
- The new Labour Market Attachment Program, delivered by Centre for Employment Innovation, will help under-represented groups, including First Nations, African Nova Scotians, visible minorities, Nova Scotians on Employment Support and Income Assistance, persons with disabilities, and older workers, attach to the labour market.
- The START program will continue to assist unemployed individuals attach to the labour market and will have an increased focus on encouraging skill development and employment opportunities for under-represented groups, while assisting employers in accessing and training the workforce they need.
- Through the Student Summer Skills Incentive program, we will continue to support the hiring of more than 700 post-secondary students for career-related summer jobs, through wage subsidies to community organizations throughout the province.
- The Workplace Education Initiative and the Workplace Innovation and Productivity Skills Incentive will undergo program evaluation and process review to ensure program objectives are being achieved, and to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of both programs. The evaluation will also seek to ensure programs are providing a seamless continuum of training to employers and employed Nova Scotians.
- The Innovate to Opportunity Program will provide funding for Small and Medium Enterprises to hire recent, highly-qualified graduates of Nova Scotia post-secondary institutions to assist these enterprises to become more innovative and export-oriented.

Enhance Accountability through Metrics and Measurement

- LAE will use new regulatory provisions to acquire post-graduation labour market attachment statistics to determine the effectiveness of training programs that lead to trained-for jobs in 1-2 years. This information will be used to apply regulatory measures to

existing and proposed programs to protect student and government training investments, which lead to job attachment and youth retention.

- LAE will work with partners to identify key metrics for measuring the outcomes of government's youth initiatives. Evaluation will help to focus our efforts and achieve the best results for youth retention and workforce participation.

Enhance Programs and Opportunities for Nova Scotians

- The Apprenticeship START program will promote apprenticeship with a focus on providing incentives to employers to hire diverse Nova Scotians. This will provide apprenticeship opportunities for aboriginal Nova Scotians, African Nova Scotians, women in under-represented trades and persons with disabilities.
- The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency will implement the recommendations from the Diversity and Inclusion Framework and Action Plan to promote and increase diversity in the apprenticeship system and ensure appropriate supports for all Nova Scotians who want to participate in the system.
- Through the One Journey program, we will continue to enhance support, skill development, and employment opportunities for underrepresented groups.
- LAE will work with our partners at the Department of Seniors and other partners to advance actions identified in *SHIFT: Nova Scotia's Action Plan for an Aging Population* to recognize, value, and support the social economic contribution of older adults to Nova Scotia.
- We will also work with our partners at the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage to advance actions identified in the *Culture Action Plan*.

Enhance Student Assistance Support

- Changes to the Canada Student Loan Program (CSLP) and the Nova Scotia Student Assistance (NSSA) program will be implemented; shifting from a single to a dual assessment process. An increase in weekly assistance and an extension of loan forgiveness eligibility from 4 to 5 years will result in enhancements to the financial supports for post-secondary students.

Foster Innovation through Research and Development

- The department will work with the three existing provincial bodies (Nova Scotia Research and Innovation Trust, Offshore Energy Research Association and the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation) to establish Research Nova Scotia. Research Nova Scotia will help to leverage third-party funding, particularly federal funding, to support research and development projects in the province. This will include supporting research that aligns with

Provincial priorities, and working to attract and retain high-quality researchers to Nova Scotia. The department will further work with partners to develop guidelines for the Research Opportunities Fund, which will be administered by Research Nova Scotia.

Help Nova Scotians meet their Full Employment Potential

- Additional funding will be provided to create more Apprenticeship Training Support opportunities, which assist registered apprentices to receive Employment Insurance (EI) benefits or financial assistance to help with additional costs related to their participation in the program.
- Job Creation Partnerships will provide eligible individuals with work experience on community based projects, leading to enhanced employment related skills.
- The department will review the Skills Development Program, which provides financial assistance to eligible unemployed individuals who need new or additional occupational skills or training, with a focus on improving outcomes for participants.
- Increasing the focus on under-represented groups, the Works for You program is intended to support projects across the province that increase job readiness of non EI eligible clients and aid in attaching participants to the workforce.
- LAE will continue to advance the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning Renewal to better understand the challenges and opportunities adult learners face, identify gaps in the current system and develop a strategic roadmap that outlines changes required to address the existing gaps.

Improve Processes for Client Service and Program Delivery

- A client satisfaction survey will be conducted to help identify improvements in the labour service programs delivered to Nova Scotians.
- Nova Scotia Student Assistance currently contracts with a third-party service provider for delivery of some aspects of assistance programming. The contract expires in 2018. Options for ongoing service provision will be explored.
- A Training Safety Practices and Oversight program will be developed to enhance and oversee student safety in pre-employment programs within the private career college sector.

Increase Awareness and Accessibility of Information

- An awareness framework will be developed and implemented, with a focus on temporary foreign workers, new immigrants, and youth, ensuring accessibility of information and awareness around minimum labour standards.

Promote Apprenticeship as a Viable Post-Secondary Option

- A marketing and communications strategy will be implemented to promote apprenticeship and educate apprenticeship partners on their roles and responsibilities.
- The ground work will be laid for expanded NSAA Youth Apprenticeship Programs such as Serve It Up, Test Drive, and Building Futures for Youth. These expanded programs will attract more apprentices.
- A Youth Decision Survey will be conducted to determine how youth are making career decisions relating to the skilled trades.
- Tuition fees will be removed for apprentices taking technical training. A tuition deposit to hold the training seat will still be in effect.

Promote Sustainable Universities

- LAE will continue to implement the key deliverables outlined in the 2015-19 MOU between the Province and Nova Scotia Universities. A report will be prepared with recommendations for Government and university presidents on sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia university campuses.
- We will work with universities to ensure they are reporting on their progress for each measure in their Outcome Agreements by March, 2018.
- To advance the Standard Financial Reporting (SFR) initiative, LAE will hire a new Director of Post-Secondary Operations. Financial oversight to the universities, the Nova Scotia Community College, and the Private Career Colleges will be provided.

Recruit and Retain International and Interprovincial Students

- LAE will continue to support international student recruitment and retention by implementing three initiatives:
    - Study & Stay - under this program, students previously recruited in 2016-17 will begin their studies in the fall of 2017;
    - EduNova - funding will be provided to support student recruitment and retention; and
    - the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET) will update a study on the economic impact of international students in Atlantic Canada.

Reduce Barriers for Business through Harmonization with the Atlantic Provinces

- LAE will continue to implement trade harmonization to increase mobility and harmonization in the Atlantic Provinces and across Canada, so that apprentices have greater opportunity to complete their training without disruption. We will work with our

Atlantic Partners to align our internal policies, review fee structures, incentive programs, recognition of prior learning, and apprentice mobility.

- LAE will work with its Atlantic partners to explore the potential to align the criteria and calculation for public holidays.
- In collaboration with our Atlantic partners, we will identify opportunities to align licensing between provinces and develop a regional license for certain trades related to technical safety.
- LAE will continue to explore mutual recognition of workplace safety training and personal protection equipment (PPE) standards to alleviate regulatory burdens associated with differing standards and requirements.

Steward Federal-Provincial Labour Market Agreements

- LAE manages three Federal–Provincial/Territorial labour market transfer agreements aimed at addressing Nova Scotia's labour market opportunities, challenges and the building of a skilled, adaptable and inclusive workforce. The agreements include: the Labour Market Development Agreement; Canada Job Fund Agreement; and the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers. LAE will continue to administer and improve the delivery of programs and services under these devolved agreements to achieve shared federal-provincial labour market outcomes. In 2017-18, the department will lead the negotiation of a new flexible and responsive agreement architecture for all four of the Province's labour market transfer agreements (including the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities, administered by the Department of Community Services).

Support Fairness, Safety and Training Through Consistent Compliance

- NSAA will expand the suite of enforcement tools available to enforcement officers to facilitate compliance in the compulsory certified trades.
- LAE will develop a safety compliance framework that sets out a comprehensive approach to achieving compliance. This framework will emphasize the need for staff to use the best available information to assess each case on its own merits and choose the most appropriate response to the situation.
- We will continue to strengthen our strategic partnerships with key industry sectors such as construction, retail, farming, health, and fisheries. We will leverage the reach and credibility of industry associations to promote safe workplace practices, identify compliance challenges, and develop collaborative, sector-appropriate approaches and solutions.
- We will support the completion of a five-year action plan for the health sector, with a focus on publicly funded home care, long term care, and community services.

Support Youth Transition

- LAE will continue to Co-Chair the Transition Task Force with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and review the recommendations provided in the report, *From School to Success: Clearing a Path*. We will reconvene the Task Force in the fall of 2017 to report on progress.
- We will continue to advance the *Youth Employment Action Plan,* creating opportunities and jobs right here in Nova Scotia.

DEPARTMENTAL EXPENSES SUMMARY

($ thousands)

Programs and Services	2016-2017 Estimate ($000's)	2016-2017 Forecast ($000's)	2017-2018 Estimate ($000's)
Administration	722	716	803
Corporate Policy and Services	3,942	4,937	3,917
Safety	14,975	14,513	15,312
Labour Services	7,886	7,472	7,344
Skills and Learning	129,097	142,438	129,176
NS Apprenticeship Agency	10,901	13,458	17,822
Higher Education	54,051	59,312	58,643
School Cap Amortization	4,920	4,920	4,810
Community College Grants	137,277	137,277	138,324
Total – Departmental Expenses	364,271	385,043	376,151
Assistance to Universities	380,605	437,926	408,803
Total LAE and Assistance to Universities	**744,876**	**822,969**	**784,954**
Ordinary Recoveries	125,682	138,835	131,871
TCA Purchase	1,100	7,059	14,004
Funded Staff (# of FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	264.4	252.3	266.2